

R E S T R I C T E D

maintained blocking positions during night 20-21 January across CCA front and withdrew to successive delaying positions protecting withdrawal of the two divisions.

CCA performed its rear guard action from SCHOENENBERG-HOFFEN-HATTEN- area without loss of personnel. The only equipment loss was one wrecked trailer, destroyed by the 62nd AIB when abandoned. CCA closed in bivouac area 211800 January.

Period 22-31 January was spent reorganizing, in maintenance of vehicles and weapons and training of reinforcements. Units performed reconnaissance of routes of possible future operations.

The following commendation was received:

HEADQUARTERS 79TH INFANTRY DIVISION
Office of the Assistant Division Commander

APO 79, U. S. Army
24 January 1945

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : Commanding General, 79th Infantry Division.

1. On 6 January 1945, CCA, 14th Armored Division, was attached to the 79th Division and moved to the vicinity of Surbourg as a reserve to meet a possible armored attack against our lines. Colonel C. H. Karlstad, Commanding, reported to C.P. of T. F. Wahl in Soultz for instructions. Based upon the current estimate of the situation, preparations were made to meet an anticipated attack from the direction: Wissembourg - Ingolsheim - Soultz. The 48th Tank Battalion was disposed with one company near Soultz and two in reserve near Surbourg to meet such an attack.

2. As the deployment of the 21st Panzer Division developed it became evident that the German Command had abandoned an apparent earlier intention in the Ingolsheim area for the more favorable panzer country in the Aschbach Stundwiller region. Heavy attacks were launched against the front of the 3rd Bn., 313th Inf., which was then weak in TD strength. Colonel KARLSTAD immediately redisposed the 48th Tank Battalion to meet the new threat. Company "A" from Surbourg was moved to a new location near Kuhlendorf with an overwatching position on the high ground behind the Seelbach River flowing thru Hoffen and Leiterswiller. This new disposition enabled CCA to move all three companies immediately either to the north northeast or east to meet an armored attack with minimum delay as the road net was very favorable for this purpose.

3. a. On 9 January, 1945, the 25th Panzer Grenadier Division, newly arrived in the area, launched a sudden violent attack against the sector of the 1st Bn., 242nd Infantry, east of Hatten, surrounding the town of Hatten and pushing armored detachments to the west towards our undefended rear areas. With minimum delay Colonel KARLSTAD launched his command into action. Company "A", 48th Tank Battalion moved immediately to Rittershoffen to cover the assembly. The other two tank companies started in the same direction.

b. Upon arrival near Rittershoffen at about 1415, Company "A", 48th Tank Battalion occupied concealed firing positions with the 1st Platoon south

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and east of the town. One platoon was north and east, and the remaining one, south and west of Rittershoffen. Within a matter of minutes of its arrival, enemy tanks appeared on the front of the 1st Platoon. In short order five medium sized tanks (enemy) were destroyed and no further armored exploitation was attempted by the enemy.

c. As soon as infantry reserves could be assembled a counterattack was launched to relieve Hatten. This attack succeeded in reopening the Rittershoffen - Hatten road and relieving the 2nd Bn., 242nd Infantry and elements of the 1st Bn who were cut off in the town.

d. With the arrival of the 14th Armored Division, CCA reverted to its parent unit.

4. Upon withdrawal from the northern sector, CCA again came under command of the 79th Division. Its mission was to cover the withdrawal of the infantry rear guards and check precipitous armored pursuit. The arrangements to this end were made in a superior manner. However, as the enemy had apparently had enough no such pursuit developed and the withdrawal was accomplished without incident.

5. I desire, therefore, to comment to you CCA, 14th Armored Division, Colonel C. H. KARLSTAD Commanding, for a superior performance of duty. It is deserving of the words "well done" from its commander.

(s) G. D. Wahl

G. D. WAHL,
Brig. Gen. U S Army
Asst Div Comdr

1st Ind

HEADQUARTERS 79TH INFANTRY DIVISION, A.P.O. 79, U.S. Army, 24 January 1945.

TO: Commanding General, 14th Armored Division.

1. I concur in the above commendation and in addition, have awarded the Bronze Star Medal to Colonel KARLSTAD.

2. I desire to take this occasion to thank you for the part your division played in the recent operations around Rittershoffen and Hatten.

(s) I. T. Wyche

U. T. WYCHE
Major General U S Army
Commanding

2nd Ind.

AG 200,6

(24 Jan 45 - Commendation)

HEADQUARTERS 14TH ARMORED DIVISION, APO 446, U. S. Army, 5 February 1945.

TO: Commanding Officer, Combat Command "A", 14th Armored Division.